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Bedouins MJ4

Male Line of Descent

Chap. VI

(1) *Bani 'Ám.* According to Shaikh Nahar al Mutalaqim of the 'Ajman, who discussed this with me on 11th August, 1935, the members of every tribe or section of a tribe which have a common male ancestry are known as Bani 'Ám, *lit.* the children of one uncle. The Mutair and 'Ajman are more strict than others about the interpretation of the above, he said, and carry it to the seventh generation of ascendants. Beyond that, he added, genealogies were rather vague. Only blood relationship on the father's side (*'Amam*) gives the right of Bani 'Ám or Ibn 'Ám, and not the relationship on the mother's side, which is known under the name of *Khawál.*

A man in trouble can always rely on his *'Amam* to come to his assistance. They must do this regardless of consequences—and so must a tribe which has such relationship with another, the 'Ajman-Murra tribes for instance.

The 'Ajman and Murra were continually at each other's throats in the past, and raided and counter-raided in merry fashion, but when an outside enemy attacked the one, all private feuds were put aside, and the two united in resisting the attack. The reason was that they were descended from the common ancestor Yam and so were *Bani 'Ám.*

The families of Ibn Sa'ud, Ibn Subah, Ibn Khalifa and Abal Khail of Qassim are all *Bani 'Ám,* and so can always be counted on, in any serious difficulty, to come to one another's help. They are all 'Anizah, descended from the same distant ancestor.

A man's *Khawál,* his maternal relations, are of course useful, especially in offering sanctuary, but they are not under the same obligations as a man's *Bani 'Ám.*

'Amam al rajál, akam min khawálu is a well-known saying. This explains happenings which sometimes mystify the European. A man marries a woman from another tribe; she proves unfaithful (the instance I am describing has to my knowledge happened among 'Arabdar and Hadhar persons of Kuwait), the husband does not seem to mind much, but hints to the wife's *'Amam* that she is not all that she should be. They, being her *Bani 'Ám,* kill her, but do not enlist the outraged husband. She is slain to clear the family's good name, and to enable them to hold up their heads in the *mijlis arjal,* or counsels of men. Should a couple have children, a son and a daughter, and the daughter happens to disgrace the family, then either the